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THRESH

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NUMBER 6: MAY 7

The myth of a homogeneous urban landscape is currently under deconstruction. The notion of otherness as aberration is being challenged by assertions that the city in reality is constituted by otherness. This issue of *Thresholds* attempts to engage various discourses

surrounding this reinter-
pretation. Within the
following
articles
urban
heteroge-
neity and
its

architectural implications are explored relative to public space and gender; the struggle for equitable siting of homeless shelters; the spaces that difference make; and a warning against the resurrection of modernist rhetoric as a means towards contemporary urban problem solving. Further, several recent student projects are included which investigate alternative occupations (both physical and programmatic) of the urban landscape.

GUARDED CONDITIONS



SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS / SEX ATTACKS

with Stephen J. Gould, Gordon L. ...

MEN IN SPACE

by Rosalyn Deutsche

The of an essay that appeared in The of

With the publication of two new books, both by geographers, urban studies has decisively entered the postmodern debate, determined apparently to win. Indeed, Edward Soja's *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Theory* and David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* possess a winning commonality. They bring together critical discourses about space, culture, and aesthetics within the framework of a social theory that purports to explain the postmodern world. This formula has been used before, though never so thoroughly by a disparate group of scholars who, over the last decade, have written not only about postmodern culture but about modernism as well.

For anyone in the art world eager to escape the control that traditional aesthetic categories exercise over how art is defined, such interdisciplinary approaches have a strong, even a fatal attraction. Strong for many reasons, but especially because they permit us to view art from previously excluded perspectives within art. It is hard to know whether it modifies its very identity. That shift is unsettling for what it reveals about art but also for what it suggests about knowledge: for an instant, an explanation appears to be uncertain since objects of knowledge are themselves negotiable. Fixed only by discursive relationships and exclusions, knowledge is a jumping when it reveals this process. The

interdisciplinary approach is appealing, then, because momentarily it undermines the authority of all knowledge that claims to know definitively the things it studies. But interdisciplinary holds dangers too, because it does not automatically become anti-disciplinary. More often, disciplines unite in alliances that fortify an authoritarian epistemology, by adding to its appearance of completeness instead of relinquishing it for a more democratic one. Is the current synthesis of urban studies, cultural theory and sociology such a defensive formation? If so, what are its casualties?

In 1985, sociologist Janet Wolff raised a similar question. Investigating the biases that had shaped her profession's definitions of both the modern urban experience and the culture of modernism, she drew a succinct conclusion: "The literature of modernity describes the experience of men." Seconding Wolff's opinion and refuting her assertion that modernity is a product of the city, Griselda Pollock later extended Wolff's thesis to evaluate another field, art history, and in particular T.J. Clark's "exemplary text of social art history," *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (1984). There, Clark compares the spatial compositions and iconography of late nineteenth century modernist painting to modern city space. He describes, with sophistication, Haussmann's spatial renovation of Paris and his analysis into a sociological pattern popularized in Marshall Berman's influential book, *Art That Is Solid Moves Into Air* (1982): modernization is a process of capitalist socioeconomic restructuring; modernity, the experience produced by that process; and modernism, a cultural form developing from the historical modern experience. Adhering to ... (continued on p.5)

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1993

Not In My Backyard

by Nina Herzog

Community Board 2 Manhattan on what many people in the world consider the heart of the gay community Christopher Street

The City Proposes an AIDS Shelter in a Gay Community

The reaction of the community was not surprising. Although they wanted to help homeless people with AIDS Christopher Street was inappropriate, they claimed, because it already was overburdened with facilities for people with AIDS, three of which were within several blocks of the proposed site. The detractors of this shelter also cited the fact that the City had not contacted the community or sought its input into the siting process. If they had, the community claimed, insiders could have warned the City that Christopher Street was already "over impacted" by these facilities. Community members, including most recently members of the community board, insisted that siting of such services could not be achieved without the input and consideration of local community leaders.

What emerged was an unusual partnership between the City and the community board, aimed at reinventing the siting and programmatic design processes for the proposed facility in Community Board 2. A group of community leaders began to meet with City officials regularly in an effort to realize a design that suited the City's needs in providing housing for the homeless, and also allayed neighbor fears by letting them in on the many aspects of the design process from security to eligibility criteria. Much progress had been made and many issues resolved when the community unexpectedly learned that the City had decided to consolidate four emergency assistance units, where families go when they become homeless overnight, into one and locate it in Community Board 2. This brought an abrupt end to trust and dialogue.

Support (or Lack Thereof) for the Mayor's Plan

Meanwhile, reaction to the mayor's plan by other city officials was overwhelmingly negative. Each politician found flaw with the plan and used his/her power to try to defeat it. Particularly outraged were the representatives from upper middle or middle class white areas that had successfully resisted such uses in the past. Since the mayor's plan called for more equitable distribution of smaller shelters, he had no choice but to take on a powerful group of opponents with more money and better political connections.

Only two community boards, including Community Board 2, voted to support the mayor's plan, thereby making a commitment to work with the City to accept a plan for a shelter. But when Community Board 2's committee dissolved, it seemed the plan was done for. About a year later, a local non-profit housing organization, responded to a Request for Proposals (RFP) put out by the City in which they resubmitted a plan to establish small transitional shelters throughout the City.

Challenging the Community's Claims on Siting

Housing Works, Inc. the sad non-profit organization (continued on p. 5)



Brown Street, SoHo

WHY DOES SOHO COMMUNITY COUNCIL HATE PEOPLE WITH AIDS?

"They don't. Provided they are white, gay men. Therefore, the portion in Housing Works planned Day Treatment Center at the corner of Green and Grand can be Anglo rednecks only."

Housing Works provides housing and services to homeless people with AIDS, the majority of whom are poor, black and white. The members of the Council are white, middle-class and professional. Racism and bigotry are the reason for the fight. The old NIMBY mentality has been cleverly reworded to fit a new cause.

Housing Works clients are not different than their SoHo neighbors. They are men, women and children, both gay and straight, single and in families. All working together to embrace the future as healthy, self-sufficient individuals.

It is telling that a council must define itself as a community through the shared perception of an external enemy.

Aaron Kupper, NYC AIDS activist

A 10/10/93 based on the SoHo Greenwich Village CB2 district

Community Board 2 Manhattan

NYC is divided into 59 community districts, each of which has a contentious community board. These unpaid political bodies are made up of 50 residents appointed by the borough president and their local city council representative. Each year community boards are asked to submit to the city a Statement of Needs outlining the district's most pressing needs in terms of services from parks to transportation to social services. NYC's Community Board 2 in Manhattan covers Greenwich Village and SoHo. This community board is made up predominantly of wealthy white residents, many of whom are gay or lesbian. Therefore, each year for the last several years, Community Board 2 has listed AIDS housing as one of its top priorities in its Statement of Needs. This might suggest that this community would be more anxious and willing than most to accept housing for homeless persons with AIDS. Not so.

Dinkins Five-Year Plan

Last year Mayor Dinkins unveiled a five year plan to address the increasing epidemic of homelessness in NYC. Upon taking office and under tremendous pressure from peers to make good on campaign promises to reverse Koch's policy of warehousing the homeless in army style shelters, Dinkins was pressed to address what had proliferated during the Koch administration as a quick and dirty, temporary housing solution to the growing numbers of the city's homeless.

Dinkins had offered this five year plan as a means for ultimately closing these armies which historically have been located almost exclusively in impoverished communities. The plan proposed replacing these disease infested tuberculosis factories with smaller transitional facilities to be scattered evenly and equitably throughout the city. One of these transitional facilities was slated for

Berlin Immigration Center

Susanne May Spring 1993

critic Fernando Doneyko

The design problem is the definition and conceptualization of a center for immigration in the City of Berlin. This facility for reintegration and retraining of technicians and craftsmen from various cultural backgrounds is an example of the potential for the resolution of conflict between individuals and culture in the context of the actual world-wide immigration phenomenon. It will provide help not only for survival, but for survival with dignity by adapting skills from one background to another, as well as by counseling the immigrants relative to the cultural and administrative implications of working and living in a new environment. A residential facility will facilitate the formation of small learning teams, while the school itself will be a cluster of classrooms and workshops for hands-on learning. The heterogeneity of the community demands a sensitive understanding of the making of phenomenological and experiential architectural facts through form and material that may be universally accessible.

Mapping the St. Patrick's Day Parade by Ernest Pascucci

In Elizabeth Grosz's recent essay "Bodies Matter," she refuses to accept identity as distinct and total, but rather views it as radically situational and situation specific. Such a model indicates the complexities involved when identity politics are played out in space as is the case with the month-long controversies over the presence of Irish lesbians and gays in the St. Patrick's Day Parades in New York and Boston.

On March 14, 1991, two days before the 230th annual St. Patrick's Day Parade was to take place in New York City, the mayor's office negotiated a compromise between the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO), the group whose petition to march for the first time under their own banner in the parade was refused, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the parade's sponsor, who did the refusing. ILGO accepted the standing order of Division 7, a progressive chapter of the Hibernians, to march under their banner. The group also agreed to abide by the parade rules prohibiting marches "from wearing T-shirts or anything else that would set them apart." In exchange, Mayor David Dinkins would forfeit his traditional place at the head of the parade and would instead march with the gay group. Though ILGO sacrificed its own visibility as an organization for people who are both Irish and gay, its members felt that the mayor's presence would make up for this, both in symbolism and in media exposure.

The following day when news of the compromise hit the press, the *New York Times* praised the mayor's "saintly St. Patrick's solution" in an editorial. Then in a news article the *Times* speculated on the possibility of the mayor marching twice: first at the head of the parade, and then with ILGO and Division 7, and even went so far as to detail how this feat of being in two places at once might be accomplished. Despite all the *Times*' theorizing of Dinkins as a split political subject, the mayor chose to march only once, with Division 7 and the Irish gays. NYC's first black mayor thus became the first to decline to lead a St. Patrick's Day Parade—to which the mayor responded, "It's not my parade." The parade itself, which for years had been troubled by the drunkenness and disorderly conduct it generated, was "more raucous than usual" as the *Times* duly noted, because this year it was the stage for a debate over sexual politics. Dinkins and ILGO were met with a variety of responses ranging from occasional cheers of support, to turned backs in expression of silent disapproval, to boos, catcalls, and beer bottles thrown in expression of violent disapproval.

The event as a whole was subject to a wide range of interpretations. Many spectators felt it had become "too political," finding the presence of the gay marchers divisive and disruptive to the spirit of the parade. Dinkins, meanwhile, compared his experience of marching with ILGO to marching in Birmingham during the civil rights movement. Members of the press perceived the mayor's symbolic gesture as a sign of newfound integrity, a willingness on the part of the mayor to take a stand regardless of political fallout. Others saw it as a shrewd political move. While most Irish Americans have migrated to the suburbs, the gay population remains a sizable voting block within Dinkins's constituency.

However, the parade also revealed a gay community divided on many issues. Members of ILGO, seeking peaceful inclusion in the Hibernians' parade, chose to make their political identity visible but, for strategic purposes, not to appear all that visibly different from other parades. Other queer activists, including the Irish Queens, a group formed in response to the Hibernians' intransigence, had plans to hold a separate action along the parade route rather than march under Division 7's banner, but were persuaded by ILGO to join Division 7 and wear its marks. Among the sea of politicians, reporters, and queer activists in large, "it was hard to spot the actual Irish," commented Richard Goldstein in the *Village Voice*. "There were only eight or nine of them, in cloth coats and frizzed hair. How could they stand out against the young black queen in the proboscis and Mohawk and fringed leather jacket, with a huge pink triangle pinned to his back?" The ethnic solidarity expressed by

the Irish gays and lesbians was clearly not shared by all of their queer brethren and sisters. "I'm not even in my body today," commented Bill Dobbs, a member of Queer Nation who marched in the service of a cause that was not his own. In acknowledging the specifics of ILGO's cause, Paul O'Dwyer stated, "We do have a different agenda. We're bound together by being Irish, being immigrants, and being gay."

In the two years following this initial controversy, the St. Patrick's Day Parade has become the site of an annual debate played out on the streets of Manhattan and South Boston in NYC. ILGO has been banned from marching for the past two years. The Hibernians claim that theirs is a religious parade, and that homosexuality is antithetical to the beliefs of the Catholic Church. Although excluding a group on the basis of sexual orientation violates the city's civil rights laws, the Hibernians have kept ILGO out by financially privatizing the event. Their cause has been held up in state courts by the first amendment right to assembly. In Boston, however, the Irish Lesbians and Gays of Boston (GLIB) have been permitted by court order to march for the past two years, despite the Allied War Veterans' Council privatization of the parade in 1993. Because the Boston parade coincides with another holiday, Evacuation Day (in celebration of a Revolutionary War battle), a Massachusetts superior judicial court ruled that the parade is a secular event and thereby granted GLIB the right to march. The Allied War Veterans' Council has been hard pressed to prove that the tanks that cut down the streets of Southe during the parade are part of a religious procession.

The efforts of ILGO, GLIB, and their supporters to have, in the words of O'Dwyer, placed "the discourse of lesbian and gay rights firmly within the discourse of St. Patrick's Day" in NYC's 1993 parade, peaceful protests and civil disobedience along the parade route resulted in the arrest of 228 activists. The threat that queer visibility poses to the Hibernians' conception of Irish identity is reflected in the lengths to which they will go to maintain their vision, including the cord-off of two blocks surrounding St. Patrick's Cathedral for Cardinal John O'Connor, and invited guests. In Dublin, where a lesbian/gay contingent has marched without problems for the past few years, the group carried a banner this year that read "HELLO NEW YORK." Most recently, in Boston, the procession of 25 GLIB members, surrounded by twice the usual police force, has become the focus of the parade. This response evicted from the predominantly Irish community of South Boston, ranging from verbal and violent antagonism to open support, the latter of which has grown substantially from 1992 to 1993, reveal a community divided over the issue of lesbian and gay civil rights.

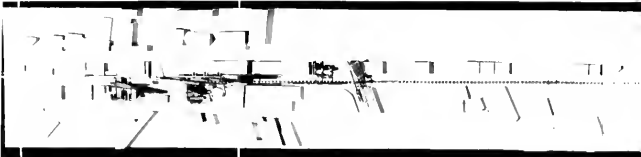
Relevant to the struggle for queer visibility within the numerous constituencies represented here is Edward Soja's call for "spatial histories." The overlaps of sexual, ethnic, and religious identities and the various subjects partaking in these St. Patrick's Day Parade struggles constitute, as the title of Soja's forthcoming book implies, "the spaces that difference makes." However, to adequately address the particularities of the various subject positions in space requires a more complicated model than Soja offers when he defers to Fredrick Jameson's prescription for "cognitive mapping." As Rosalyn Deutsche has pointed out, there is no one map that can relate the experience of the postmodern subject to a larger totality precisely because the postmodern subject is not one, but many, and the intricacies of subjective experience ultimately yield radically different maps. Consider, in this light, Dinkins's experience of the 1991 parade as a reenactment of the civil rights movement versus the disembodied experience of Bill Dobbs, who chose to forfeit his own agenda in defiance, for a few hours along the parade route, to the agenda of the Irish lesbians and gays. The spaces that difference makes are marked by the relational differences among the various subjects operating within political spaces that parade their politics on the streets. ■

(MINOR) Urban Intervention

Thesis: Neil Harrigan
Advisor: Jan Wampler
Spring 1993

The relationship between design and the idea of a framework is essentially an attitude about ordering. A framework is an intellectual proposition which can support a variety of ideas, and in doing so, provide a resolution to the intersection of these ideas. The framework may be thought of as a mechanism for bringing things together, a joint that enables simultaneous levels of intervention to occur.

This intervention in the underutilized Boston & Maine Railroad right of way which runs through Cambridgeport from Mass. Ave. to the Charles River is intended to provide a framework for a more urban occupation of the site. By introducing physical elements which constitute various dimensions of urban fabric, a variety of unexpected interpretations or programmatic occupations are invited.

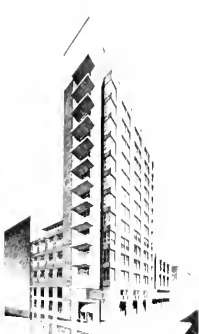


Residual Modernism?

by Juli Carson and C. Lindive Emoungu



Photo of School



There is no issue concerned with contemporary representations of housing and its various applications. Featured in the Frederick Douglass Boulevard Project, a housing development proposed for the southwest quarter of Harlem designed by Roy Shickland along with Carolyn Carson, Linda Geller and August Schaefer. This project and its companion, the Clinton School, a K-12 facility for the South Bronx by the same design team, comprised an urban Mid School and Boulevard which was on view at MIT's Tompkins Gallery this Spring. Conceived in Shickland and Geller's Hudson Studio, an architecture and planning firm in New York City, the FDB project is an ambitious effort to develop progressive residential units motivated by social and civic responsibilities. Moreover, because FCB is proposed for the highly disputed region between 158th and 164th streets east of Amsterdam Avenue, a zone in which the gentrified displaced indigenous communities and gentrifier, Columbia residents and New York liberal live in close proximity, the project comes to realization within an environment ripe for controversy and criticism. In responding to this residents' feature in FDB it is therefore not our intention to critique the project's design, nor to amicable the efficacy of the residualist schema. Rather, we wish to address the residualist rhetorical politics of FCB's representation, as realized in the project's two accompanying catalogues, which excavate pre-existing communal interests, both still influential and intact, present in the proposed "New Neighborhoods."

In the post-Fordist era, a time in which notions of citizenship, squatting, and homelessness are radically reexamining housing. It is therefore to encounter the critical framing of FCB in modernist terms. High modernist techniques, including Frank Lloyd Wright's 1894 Le Corbusier Apartments and Louis Kahn's 1948 Philadelphia Triangle Area Redevelopment, are posited in the project's catalogues as the groundwork upon which a postmodernist strategy of urban integration is said to operate. However, this post-modernist strategy in Shickland's catalogues, which serves as a tool for the departure from or critique of modernist housing legacies, but rather, is problematically as the means by which modernist paradigms can be imposed upon what remains in the rhetoric of this level of community.

It is not to say that the comprehensive reevaluation of the revitalization of Harlem and ideologically framed by Shickland from canonical modernist paradigms. Instead, his post-modernist strategy as inclusions serve to retrofit the reinvigorated modernist models into the urban landscape of Harlem. Within the rhetoric of the catalogues, which heralds Shickland's overall modernist framework, these postmodernist strategies are thus coopted as support for problematic modernist epistemologies. These coopted strategies include: the integration of proposed apartment blocks and a residential hotel into a maintained indigenous urban landscape; the construction of a tentative domestic relationships in the planning of individual housing units through these alternative people are not pictured, who or what is the speaking about or generalizing? and the inclusion of late 20th century slums as "improved communities" (although the word "slum" is still invoked by the Shickland "residual neighborhood").

As laid out in the catalogues, however, FCB refuses to signify the elements of difference to which it claims to be directed due to the text images explicitly modernist tone. Accordingly, the invocation of angst can be seen as the default problem in urban blight is situated alongside the architectural solution. The paradigmatic notion of urban blight with its residual residents walking along the streets which Ellington, Malcolm and Baldwin no longer do, emerges from and further reinforces some problematic preconceptions. Most notable among these are two primary beliefs: first, that an underprivileged yet unified community in desperate need of repair might be solely delivered from its plight by an architecturally modernist housing model appropriate in the catalogues' rhetoric

which fictionally offers modernist Harlem circa 1911 as the past to be reclaimed; and second, the restoration of a lost indigenous community with its essentialist paradigm of public-private which historically has served to create illusions of homogenized social unity that depend upon the production of otherness and exclusion (what, or better yet, which community, which public is being served or represented?). Where in Shickland's catalogues are the people described as the community, the alternative families, or the "homeowner"? Who is pictured? Spent toddlers from 1950s suburbs. The presence of well-to-do toddlers in Shickland's School and Boulevard catalogues is a curious inclusion since well socialized children in the past have been used as a litmus test for the success of modernist housing school projects. What about children from the residual neighborhood? Why are they not pictured?

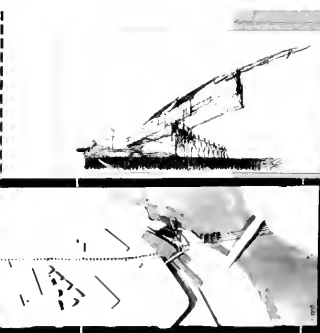
Who and what is pictured from contemporary Harlem which is then juxtaposed with imagery of a Harlem lost, are impromptu outdoor soup kitchens, graffiti-inscribed streets, and abandoned lots littered with junked cars. This is not to say that Shickland et al. are unaware of the diverse communities which their project serves, or that the Harlem Renaissance should not be a source of cultural communal pride, but rather that the modernist notion of community, in which contemporary dynamics of social cultural difference is not allowed to be played out, is firmly planted as the foundation upon which Shickland seems to be saying we can advance social change. In fact, it could be argued that the very notion of the modernist community, with its reformist architectural housing projects, is in itself one of the contributing factors that aided in the creation of what today Shickland describes as the neglected and impoverished residual neighborhood of Harlem.

Looking at nothing other than the catalogues, the notion of there being one problem is thus the weight of Shickland's project, urban blight caused by greed and divestment in particular modes of housing which then results in a neglected residual community. Accordingly, there is one solution: the challenge that demands comprehensive planning. In these terms, the revitalization of historical Harlem involves the helmsman planning narrative of cleaning up the city in order to restore Harlem to what was lost. What is lost by whom or cleaned up for whom is not directly addressed but is only implied. Therefore, what one would hope were exhausted stereotypes of inner city complacency with, and complicity in poverty are thus allowed to flourish. Ironically, Shickland et al.'s project presumably was conceived to prevent the gentrification which facilitates what is problematically termed by many as "urban blight." However, not only do the catalogues avoid rigorously addressing the site's ongoing gentrification, but modernist models of architecture as sanctuaries, which go hand in hand with gentrification, are the backdrop for a comprehensive solution for housing in Harlem. In this light, the intentions of the design team as represented by the catalogues' text and imagery are difficult to place.

B'LEUARD MANHATTAN, Roy Shickland, Linda Geller, Mosier & Co. (Columbia University, 1991), p. 1

See also Marion Young's, *The Idea of Inequality and the Civic Public*, in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton University Press, 1990 and Bruce Robbins' introduction, *The Public as Phantom*, in Robbins ed., *The Public as Phantom*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming, 1993.

4



Urban Still Life East Cambridge, Massachusetts

Thesis: Guy Willey
Advisor: Prof. William Porter
Fall 1992

The design task is the re-invention of abandoned nineteenth-century buildings in a factory complex. Treated as found objects, the existing buildings are studied as an entirety and as an ensemble of different parts. Using these building remainders, new programmatic pieces (theater, retail, office, and food gallery) are inserted into the composition to stimulate the whole.

A new order of vehicular circulation is imposed on the ground level for access and service. A new pedestrian mezzanine level stretches through all the buildings, joining opposite ends of the site. Pedestrian bridges connect a proposed public transportation stop to new public corridors within an existing brick shell.

Properties of screen, frame and passage create a variety of unique conditions unfolding into the site marking an up-dated reading and a conscious passing through the site.

Backyard (continued from p.2)

While to the Community Board, calling "Housing Works" a "Homeless Center" is not only a "misnomer" but is a political statement. The Housing Works proposed that the Community Board find a "home" for the homeless. The Community Board would cooperate to find an appropriate place. The letter also mentioned the Community Board that, according to its own Statement of Needs, housing for persons with AIDS was of the highest priority. It was further stressed that Housing Works would include the community in early planning decisions.

Initially, the Community Board's unofficial response was that it was not in the position to make determinations on siting. Although the Community Board claimed the demise of District Two plan or its failure to seek the counsel of local leaders regarding siting, when presented with the opportunity to site and design an appropriate shelter, the Community Board shrank away from the task. The Community Board realized that any "residential" place conducive to settling homeless people is inevitably in someone's backyard. Most importantly, it involved in siting as it had demanded to be for years, the Community Board would be subject to the inevitable intense political heat associated with approving or even suggesting a site.

Conclusion - Is There Any Hope?

Recently there has been much talk regarding the need for more equitable, less racist and less economically segregated siting, but there has been little discussion of how this process should be refined. Effective siting cannot be achieved without the involvement of the communities. Yet if a negative community is well off, it has the resources to use early notification to gain more time to organize against a project or to seek legal redress.

Fair share regulations are intended to accommodate community input by means of early notification of pending projects. The hope is that through community involvement and watchdog organizations, the programs will be enhanced. Unfortunately, my experience as someone who is on both sides of the fence has shown that communities simply want the power to say no. We are weary away in terms of education and social reform from the effects of fair share principles to ensure well-run successful programs for the homeless which could be viewed as an asset, not a liability, to the community.

Nina Herzog, M.U.P. is former chair and currently vice chair of Community Board 1, Manhattan Social Services Committee. She is also supportive services program director at Housing Works, Inc.

Men (continued from p.1)

This mode of society in which social relations and political practices are in the end hierarchically compartmentalized, as he explains that for him, economic life is not a given reality, but for the cultural realm, consists of representations. He neglects "nonethers" to consider the political meaning produced by his own representation of society, one which in fact he does not really examine as a representation at all. Instead, he feels free to invest unproblematically on the determinate weight in society of those arrangements we call economic, and to state that "the class of an individual" is the determinate fact of social life. Consequently, Clark interprets nineteenth-century modernist painting as an artistic response to the experience produced by Hausmann's spatial reorganization of Paris which was determined in turn by the restructuring of capitalism during the Second Empire. Modernism failed, in Clark's view, because it did not map the class divisions of modern Paris but only obscured them by revealing in painting what Hausmann produced in the actual built environment: a mythologization of the city as spectacle.

Not surprisingly, this account produces its Pollock notes: peculiar closures on the issue of sexuality. However, Clark's descriptions of cities and paintings do not entirely obscure women's experience, or even the topic of gender relations. What his book dismisses as "feminism" as a requisite rather than expendable mode of social analysis. This repression is necessitated less by Clark's interest in class than by the image of the social as an a priori totality in which a single set of social relations are privileged as determinate: the foundation of social reality.

Feminism, of course, challenged this kind of totalizing depiction long ago. It has also contributed indispensably to aesthetics precisely in Clark's principal area of concern: the visual image. Clark's book addresses both the city as an image and images of the city. For years, feminist theories have differentiated vision, pleasure in looking, from the notion of seeing as a process of perceiving the real world. The image and the act of looking are understood to be relations highly mediated by fantasies: that structure and are structured by sexual difference. Visual space, in other words, in its instance, as well of social relations, it can never be implicit or assumed to reflect either directly or through continued mediations "real" social relations that reside elsewhere. In Clark's account, in the economic relations producing the built environment. When in fact, that environment, created in part by capitalism, becomes an image, becomes what Raymond Leduc calls the "topos of a certain involvement by the eye." It is in vain to be no longer repulsive to not fixed by the economic circumstances of its production. At this point, feminist theories of visual space intersect with and complicate the political economy of urban space which does not imperially exclude feminism. That relation of exclusion takes place in an epistemological field where grandiose claims are made on theoretical space where only one theory is allowed to explain social relations of subordination. Refusing difference in such theory, the literature about modernity issuing from a synthesis of urban and cultural disciplines has in this manner constructed a coherence field by eliminating feminist criticism.

Was the same true for urban postmodernism? This question has hovered at the margins of cultural discourse since 1984 when Fredric Jameson, drawing exclusively from spatial and aesthetic discourses, published his famous article, "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." There, Jameson regally assessed postmodernism as a cultural pathology, "a symptom produced by postmodern fragmentations of space, society, the body, the subject," caused in his view, solely by the economic and spatial restructuring that constitute capitalism's third stage. The proper activity for radical artists, he prescribed, is an "aesthetic of cognitive mapping": the production of spatial imageability, by means of which inhabitants of hyperspace might overcome fragmentation, recover the ability to perceive the underlying totality and, concomitantly, find their place in the world. Jameson contends that he is suggesting how radical forces engage in political battles

over representation. Yet his proposal for analyzing space as a visual image begs just as Clark does: all political questions raised by feminist critiques of representation, most notably, the issue of positionality. A commanding position on the battleground of representation, one that denies the partial and fragmented condition of vision by claiming to perceive a total truth, is an illusory place whose construction, motivated by wishes, entails exclusions and hysterical blindness. It is a position in a relationship of knowledge that also produces total, unfragmented, "objective." This realization cannot be wished away by stating, as Jameson has, that his concepts are of course representations, the specific forms of representations matter since they are always acts of differentiation. If representations are relations, rather than embodiments of essential meanings, then the high ground of total knowledge, the external place, can only be gained by a particular confrontation with difference: the relegation of other subjectivities to positions of invisibility or what amounts to the same thing, inclusion through subordination.

Jameson's image of society and his desire for accurate maps illustrate the mechanism. Fragmentation in his account is only a pathology, and the ability to find our place has been destroyed by late capitalism alone. Because he disavows the importance and complexity of other social relations, Jameson confuses capitalism's fragmentations with the fragmentations caused by changes from feminists, gays, lesbians, postcolonials, and so on. To the types of discursive power Jameson himself invokes, universalizing foundationalist thought, essentialist discourses, constructions of unitary subjectivity. Such challenges expose Jameson's fragmented unity and complete subject as fiction from the start and he responds by silencing them. Accordingly, he has recently dropped any doubts about the nature of what he calls cognitive mapping, by revealing that what he actually means by this procedure for uncovering "total reality" is class consciousness. The very believably wiping Jameson off the map of radical social theory. How does it measure? As just another force fragmenting our ability to apprehend the real, united political field.

The Jameson School of Interdisciplinarity has yet to receive sustained attention from art critics. Its relation to feminism is placed on the agenda again by Harvey's and Soja's books about postmodernism. Leading figures in Marxist geography, the authors of these books have each contributed invaluable to analyses of the social production of space as the very condition of capitalist restructuring. They have turned to cultural theory in response to several provocations: arguments taking place within their own field, the divergence of "postmodern" political and traditional Marxism and perhaps sociology's inability to address the built environment as a signifying practice. The seriousness of Harvey's and Soja's desire to embrace the cultural field is compromised, however, by their biographies of postmodernism which are very exclusive, virtually restricted to texts by white western males and of those, none that deal with feminism and postmodernism.

To note these similarities is not to equate the two books. Indeed, Soja is uncomfortable in Harvey's rigid economic formulas for explaining the production of space and to define space as visual from the beginning. He advances, first, a concept he calls the "non-spatial dialectic" and then a "spatialized ontology." He also he is willing to postulate boundaries between disciplines and at the same time to avoid reducing their specificity but his readings of postmodern landscapes actually leave the cultural and economic realms curiously unmodulated by their encounter, the essential identity of each remain intact. Further by organizing the city into a landscape brought into existence by an outside viewer and by refusing to consider the politics of such a spatialization as an objectifying representation, Soja clings

You thrive on

mistaken

identity

Barbara Kruger, Untitled, 1981



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tenaciously to a belief in the total vantage point despite, as Liz Bondi writes, the interest he expresses in postmodern decentering.

Harvey sits out even more resolutely on the path paved by Clark and Jameson: defending political economy against postmodern fragmentation.³ With him, Jameson is no longer alone in the strength of the negative evaluation he brings to postmodernity for Harvey, too, endows postmodernity with a monolithic and threatening identity: mirrors fragmented, dislocated, compressed and abstracted experiences of space and time, experiences wrought by post-Fordist capitalism's regime of flexible accumulation—the condition of postmodernity. The concern for difference and specificity expressed in some strands of postmodern thought, their rejection of universalism, complies with the confinement of capitalism's global penetration which Harvey equates with social reality. So does the interest of artists in what Harvey terms "image creation." Attention to images, he believes, represents a turn away from the "real" social because it fetishistically rejects "essential" social meanings; it doesn't provide us with Jamesonian "mental maps" to match Carter's walls. It's a trajectory out of the condition of postmodernity.⁴

Here, Harvey is seriously confused. It is virtually true that contemporary art has explored the image. But critical practices have done so neither to assert the status of the image as a container of universal aesthetic meanings nor to celebrate the dominant images that circulate in our society. Rather, they have investigated images as part of a realm of representation where meanings and subjects are socially and hierarchically produced as, among other things, gendered. To the extent that this is its goal, postmodernism's concentration on images is emphatically not a turn away from, but rather toward, the social. If that is, relations of gender and sexuality count as more than epiphenomena of society. But Harvey, ignorant of contemporary materialist discourses about image, and blind to the fact that some of the art he invokes, Jameson's "feministic representation of women" argues, in the name of antifetishism, for transparent images that reveal essential meanings. This, truly, is fetishistic, a conception in which representations are produced by subjects who, free of desire, discover, rather than project, meaning. Corresponding to Harvey's own image of society, a metonymy that purports to perceive the absolute foundation governing social relations, Postmodernism interjects with that descriptor "Postmodernism: the complaint, 'takes matter too far,' it takes itself beyond the point where any coherent politics are left. Postmodernism has us, denying that kind of media theory which can grasp the political economic processes."

Everyone knows, by now, that postmodernism means different things to different people. Unfortunate for this, complication is no excuse for indulging as Harvey does, all critiques of totalization to an unreflective hatred of, or forgetting, in the process, the persistence of feminism with its postmodern culture. Given that persistence, what can it possibly mean to characterize postmodernity negatively as fragmented?⁵ Such assertions veer dangerously close to right wing beliefs that feminism disrupts our heritage.

It would be a shame if urban studies intervened in cultural theory only to invalidate such ideas. Non-subordinated feminisms would, their ally be equated with political escapism and "mislead contributors to analyses of the visual environment rejected in reason, of urban reality. If unresponsive to the sexual politics of representation addressed in contemporary art, urban discourse continues to construct space as a feminized object surveyed by "mastering" subjects and/or "subordinated" ones go unexamined as a mode of analysis, the discipline reproduces oppressive forms of knowledge. Driven by the desire to preserve the authority of the social sciences, urban studies will approach new cultural ideas only "to ridicule them as a threat."

Artists do not need more directives to the cognitive mapping of global space or exhortations to take the position of the "labeled." Postmodernists who pride on the image, artist, like Andy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Sue Aikobuchi, Mary Kelly, Corinne Hatch, reject such vanguard roles. They have been saying

for years that, thanks to the recognition that representations are produced by subjects, not universal subjects, the world is not so easily mapped anyhow. They don't seek to conquer this complexity, but to multiply the fragmentations, mapping the configurations of fantasy that produce coherent images, including coherent images of politics. Geographers will have to consider that space.

- 1 Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flaneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1985, p. 37.
- 2 T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, pp. 6-7.
- 3 Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, London and New York, Routledge, 1988, p. 53.
- 4 Raymond Ledrut, *Les images de la ville*, Paris, Anthropos, 1973, p. 21. Translated in Goldberger and Lagopoulos eds. *The City and the Sign: An Introduction to Urban Semiotics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 223.
- 5 Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, 164, July-August 1984, p. 63.
- 6 Jameson, "Marxism and Postmodernism," *New Left Review*, 176, July-August 1984, p. 44.
- Liz Bondi, "On Gender Tourism in the Space Age: A Feminist Response to Postmodern Geographies," paper presented at Association of American Geographers Conference, Toronto, 1990.
- 8 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford and Cambridge, Mass., 1989, pp. 116-117.

NOTES:

- The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals has long been available through librarian-assisted online searches. Now, the libraries have purchased unlimited access to this index in a user-friendly format called Citadel. This file contains citations for articles from an extensive list of architecture and planning journals from 1977 to the present. To access this file you must have an Athena account or other access to the Internet. You are welcome to ask librarians at Rotch Library's Reference Desk for assistance in trying out this file. Printed guides are also available at Rotch.

- Thresholds is looking for a new MArch co-editor. Anyone interested in subverting this Visual and Verbal Forum should contact Juli Carson through the Department of Architecture.



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